RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday the 4th December, 2007/13 *Agrahayana,* 1929 *(Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Setting up of rooftop helipads

*261. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:††
SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is mandatory to seek approval of Director General, Civil Aviation (DGCA) construction of rooftop helipads;

(b) if so, the details of guidelines in this regard;

(c) the names of individuals/companies who have been given permission to construct rooftop helipads in Mumbai and Delhi; and

(d) the number of applications pending, with names of corporate houses/individuals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Guidelines for heliport planning, physical characteristics, infrastructure, markings, safety services etc. are given in the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) Section 4 Series B Part III dated 28.08.2006 on the subject of "Heliport" and guidelines for application are given in the Civil Aviation Requirement Section 4 Series F Part I dated 16.10.2006. These guidelines are available on the DGCA website.

(c) Operational authorisation has been given to M/s. Essar Group, Mumbai and M/s. Taj Wellington Mews, Mumbai for helicopter operations from their roof top heliports.

(d) Ten proposals for elevated rooftop heliports are pending and they are:

(i) M/s. Aditya Birla Memorial Hospital, Pune; (ii) United Breweries (Holdings) Ltd., Bangalore; (iii) M/s. Satnam Realtors Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai; (iv) M/s. Bai Kabibai & Hansraj Morarji Charity Trust, Mumbai; (v) M/s. KKJ Foundation, Ernaculam, Kerala; (vi) M/s. G-Corp Project Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore; (vii) Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre, AIIMS, New Delhi; (viii) M/s. Devi Construction Company Civil Engineers & Builders, Pune and (ix) M/s. Brigade Enterprises Ltd., Bangalore (two proposals).

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Dharam Pal Sabharwal.

श्री धर्म पाल सभ्रवाल: सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में दिशा-निर्देशों के बारे में लिखा तो है, लेकिन उनको सभा पटल पर रखा नहीं गया है। उनके संबंध में केवल यह लिख दिया गया है कि 28.08.2006 और 16.10.2006 को दो दिशा-निर्देश दिए गए हैं और उनके अनुसार ही कार्य किया जाता है। मैं मंत्री जी से यह चाहता था कि अगर ये दिशा-निर्देश सभा पटल पर भी रखे जाते तो पूरे हाउस को इस बात का पता चल पाता कि इसके लिए क्या दिशा-निर्देश बने हुए हैं।

दूसरा मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूं कि हॉस्पिटल्स पर हेलीपैड बनाने के लिए भी बहुत से प्रस्ताव आए हैं, लेकिन उनको मंजूरी देने में इतना विलम्ब क्यों हो रहा है? इसके क्या कारण हैं? माननीय मंत्री जी यह भी बताएं कि जिस बिल्डिंग पर हेलिपैड बनाए जाने की मंजूरी दी जाती है, वह कितनी मजबूत है और उसकी फाउंडेशन कितनी मजबूत है, इसकी छानबीन के लिए किसी इंडिपेंडेंट आर्किटेक्ट से अथवा किसी मान्यता प्राप्त संस्था के सिविल इंजीनियर्स से क्या उसका निरीक्षण करवाया जाता है? उसके लिए क्या मापदंड अपनाए जाते हैं? यह मेरा पहला सप्लीमेंटरी है।

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: आपके पहले प्रश्न में ही कई प्रश्न हैं।

सभापति जी, इसकी जो गाइडलाइन्स हैं, जिसके बारे में माननीय सदस्य चाहते हैं कि उन्हें सभा पटल पर रखा जाए, ये गाइडलाइन्स डीजीसीए की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध हैं। उसके बावजूद भी अगर माननीय सदस्य चाहते हैं तो मैं उन्हें सभा पटल पर रखने के लिए तैयार हूं। आज इस प्रश्न के उत्तर में मुझे उसकी कोई आवश्यकता नहीं महसूस हुई, किन्तु उन्हें सभा पटल पर रखे जाने में हमारी तरफ से कोई आपत्ति नहीं है।

जहां तक रूफ के हेलीपैड का सवाल है, अभी हमारे यहां पर एविएशन का ग्रोथ इस तरह से हो रहा है कि नये-नये हवाई जहाजों और हेलीकॉप्टर्स का आयात हो रहा है। लोगों की आर्थिक तरक्की हो रही है, इस वजह से भी अब इन सब नई-नई सेवाओं की शुरूआत होने जा रही है।

जहां तक रूफ-टॉप हेलीपैड का सवाल है, इस संबंध में डीजीसीए के कुछ नियम बने हुए हैं। यह स्वाभाविक भी है कि अगर किसी आवेदक ने उसकी गाइडलाइन्स के हिसाब से मापदंड पूरे न किए हों तो निश्चित है कि उसमें विलम्ब होगा ही, वरना अगर कोई उसकी गाइडलाइन्स के हिसाब से हेलीपैड बनाना चाहेगा तो डीजीसीए की ओर से उसमें कोई आपत्ति नहीं होनी चाहिए। जो भी गाइडलाइन्स बनाई जाती हैं, वे लोगों की सुरक्षा के लिए ही बनाई जाती हैं, इसलिए हेलीपैड ऐसा बनना चाहिए तो नियमों के अनुरूप हो।

सर, जहां तक बिल्डिंग की मजबूती का सवाल है, यह स्वाभाविक ही है कि जब कोई रूफटॉप पर हेलीपैड बनाना चाहेगा तो कंसल्टिंग आर्किटेक्ट या स्ट्रक्चरल इंजीनियर इन सब बातों को ध्यान में रख कर ही उनको सर्टिफिकेट देगा।

श्री धर्म पाल सभ्रवाल: सर, यह सर्टिफिकेट कौन सी रिकोगनाइज्ड संस्था से लिए जाते हैं? मेरा दूसरा सवाल है कि International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) ने हेलिपैड बनाने के संदर्भ में कुछ नियम बनाए हैं, वे नियम क्या हैं? मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह भी जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या भारत सरकार इन्हीं नियमों को अपना कर चलती है और लागू करती है?

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: सर, DGCA के सारे गाइडलाइन्स International Civil Aviation Organization के अनुरूप ही बनाए जाते हैं, जिसकी चर्चा माननीय सदस्य कर रहे हैं। उसी की वजह से सुरक्षा तथा बाकी सारे मापदंडों को देखा जाता है। मैं उनको आश्वस्त करना चाहता हूं कि जहां तक इसका सवाल है, तो इसमें कोई कमी नहीं बरती जाएगी।

श्री धर्म पाल सभ्रवाल: सर, हॉस्पिटल्स को यह अभी तक क्यों नहीं मंजूर किया जा रहा? ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: जिसने भी आवेदन किया है ...(व्यवधान)...

श्री धर्म पाल सभ्रवाल: उन्होंने आवेदन किया हुआ है ...(व्यवधान)... यह अभी तक मंजूर नहीं हुआ है, उसका क्या कारण है?

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: उसके बारे में कम-से-कम उसके जो नियम हैं, अगर वे उन गाइडलाइन्स की पूर्ति करते होंगे तथा उन शर्तों के हिसाब से बनाए जाएँगे, तो उसमें किसी को विलम्ब करने का कोई कारण नहीं है।

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether the Government asked the public sector undertaking, Pawan Hans, to prepare the feasibility report on construction of heliports and helipads in the country. If so, what are the details of the feasibility report submitted by the Pawan Hans?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, I appreciate the spirit of the question. The biggest problem we face today is, on the one side, we want these services to expand; everybody feels that helicopter transportation, even in case of medical emergencies or otherwise, is very important. And, on the other side, unfortunately, if you see, except the airports of Mumbai or Delhi or any other major airport, in any major metropolitan city, there is virtually not a single heliport or piece of land available for use of helicopter operations. And, that is why Pawan Hans has been trying, it may have been read by you also in the media, to develop heliports in Delhi and in other cities. Unfortunately, we have not yet met with any success because land availability is with local administration and they should provide for all these things. Ultimately, it is a service to the people of that city or that region. So, I would urge, in fact, all the hon. Members also to take it up with their respective areas and provide this thing. It is not for Pawan Hans; it could be used by anybody. It is important because in this day and age, for medical evacuation and other kinds of emergencies, helicopter is considered a very, very reliable mode of transport.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Sir, as the hon. Minister is aware, I speak with a little bit of experience of general aviation and particularly of helicopters, he has earned many compliments for the opening up of the aviation sector and the very rapid growth. I would like to submit to him that our regulations — not just for heliports, but for general aviations a whole — are in need of a complete overhaul because many of them were drafted many decades ago and the technologies and realities have changed. Sir, I am also aware that he is working on some such programme. I have met some of his officers. He has got some very enthusiastic people in the DGCA and I know that they are doing some benchmarking exercises with international norms. I would like the hon. Minister to apprise us, what is the status of this benchmarking exercise? And, can you give us any commitment as to what timeframe in which you can have an overhaul of these regulations so that they are in line with international norms?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: What Mr. Panda has just mentioned, Sir, he himself is a helicopter pilot. He recently acquired a license from South Africa and also endorsed by the Indian DGCA. So, I am sure, he has a very close interaction with the regulatory authorities. Sir, again I repeat, all basic guidelines, rules and regulations are framed inaccordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation. They have a Charter. We are a signatory to the Charter and we are following those guidelines. Of course, aviation in India has changed substantially in the last few years and to that extent we need to update and do a lot of homework to make our rules and regulations in sync with what is the requirement of the day. I can assure you that not only is this an on-going exercise, even last week this hon. House passed the Aircraft Amendment Bill which seeks certain more regulatory powers to the regulator. Earlier, so many things, like licensing of airports and various other things including technicians, engineers, etc. were not so much in the purview of the DGCA. But now, we have brought in that amendment so that all these things can be addressed. Also, just to finally highlight, we have in close cooperation a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFAA, which is the Federal Aviation Authority, and also with the European EASA and we

are now working closely to devise procedures because earlier our aviation was of a very smaller scale and now with the high growth, we need to factor in all these changes to make aviation not only safe and secure but also to factor the concerns raised by him.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Sir, apart from the roof-top heliport, which certainly is a welcome addition, I would like to point out that in the mountainous areas of our country, particularly in the North-East and in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttaranchal, there are areas which are not accessible at all, and there is no space to build airports. Is there any programme with the Ministry to build a series of heliports? I think, you don't need a lot of land. If you build a series of heliports and introduce helicopter services, it will greatly expedite the movement of people, tourists and other essential services in the mountainous areas. Is the any such plan under your consideration?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, certainly, helicopter is the simplest and possibly the fastest mode of travel in such kind of terrains. We have a large terrain in our country. Many States are virtually in the hilly terrain or mountainous terrain. Therefore, it is advisable to have more helicopter activity. I do admit that we have got a lot of requests from many State Governments. Our endeavour, of course, is to see that the State-owned Pawan Hans does the maximum operation. But it is not possible for the only company in the State sector to support this kind of initiative. To that extent, a lot more private companies have now been given licences. They are operating in these areas. Of course, they are not to the entire satisfaction of all of us or able to meet the requirements of that region. but, again, heliports, I would say, can be provided by each State Government in many places. Ultimately, there is no construction. It is a paved piece of concrete which requires a couple of acres and a little clearance around it. I am sure, if the State Governments really take this up, as an initiative, and also lower the sales-tax on the fuel for this kind of operations, this will become a little bit practical; otherwise, helicopter operations are much more expensive than fix-swing operations. If fuel is more expensive, naturally, it will add to the cost of operations. It will not make it a means of more people travelling in it. So, it is a combination of providing a little bit of infrastructure support and a little bit of incentive. I am sure, the State Governments would come forward. Everything can't be done by us. We can only be the catalyst for growth. We can only be the facilitator. A little bit of responsibility should be taken up by the State Governments also. I would urge upon the hon. Members also to help us in this endeavour.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, the demand for roof-top helipads and heliports are growing day by day, especially, from the corporate sector and new colonies or new satellite towns which are coming up. The new builders, when they announce a swimming pool, they talk about heliports and helipad facilities in their building. The point is that while drafting the guidelines, though he has already stated that it is done as per the international guidelines, whether the air freedom of the cities is taken into consideration. In a city, if you allow a person in a multi-soreyed building to construct a helipad, you are obstructing the neighbouring area. You need an open area for that. But in a highly dense city like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad where, maybe, a rich-man is asking for helipad on the roof-top and if you are permitting him, you are creating a nuisance for the neighbours. I would like to know whether you have taken that into consideration or not.

Secondly, I have noted that in most of the districts, whenever a VVIP visits that district, they make a temporary helipad. If a helipad mapping is done-just now my learned colleague, Dr. Karan Singh, has mentioned about hilly areas—it will be useful simultaneously for any other medical emergency or for any other emergency and the GPRS system should be

installed in our helicopters. I have noted, while travelling in helicopters, that it is difficult for them to locate the place because enough mapping is not done in our country. That is the reason why they can't locate the village or the place. They go on hovering here and there. It takes hours together to search and they spoil the time, energy and oil also. I would like to know whether they are going to do mapping of such helipads in the country.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, helipads are now becoming more and more passionable. Today also, you must have read in the newspapers, one *dulha* went on a helicopter to get married in a village. *(Interruptions)*. But he could not land there because it was very near to an airport. That apart, the fact is, again every helipad has to be made according to the guidelines which are issued by the DGCA, which again I repeat, is in the interest of safety of the people who use it. Notwithstanding that, the local issues which he mentioned of noise pollution or disturbance in that vicinity, I am sure that has to be factored in the NOC which is given by the local authorities. But, at the same time, in big areas, big Metropolitan cities, New York, London and many other big cities, they do have rooftop helipads. I am sure they do factor in these kinds of concerns. I think, there are operating hours so that people do not get disturbed, may be, at night or during odd hours or on holidays. These guidelines can be factored in. But it is basically only after NOC is obtained from the local authorities that the DGCA would proceed. At the moment, only two helipads have been licensed in India so far and both are in Mumbai. I am sure in the years to come, more and more helipads will be coming up. Therefore, the local authorities will need to factor in some of the issues. So far as mapping is concerned, most of the helipads, which are made especially during elections, are temporary helipads. How can you have GPRS monitoring of that particular thing? But we are moving towards satellite-based navigation system and we will be the fourth country in the world. Hopefully, by next year, when our satellite is launched, the Indian skies will be satellite controlled navigation GPRS. That will, of course, make the things much more accurate for pilots and everything will be streamlined much more. I can assure you that we are moving much ahead of the most developed countries in launching satellite-based navigation.

Credit flow to MSMEs

*262. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is increasing the credit flow from commercial banks to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs);

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether Government has any proposal to give special packages to each State in this regard, especially in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the present position thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (f) For stepping up credit to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Government of India had announced a Policy Package in Parliament on August 10, 2005 advising all Scheduled